**Externally aided projects for the preservation of forests**

296. SHRI BHAGBAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some externally aided projects are being implemented in the country for the preservation of forests and forest wealth;

(b) if so, the name of the States where these projects are being implemented;

(c) whether any such project is being implemented in Orissa;

(d) if so, since when and the amount spent on the preservation of forest and forest wealth in Orissa under those projects till now; and

(e) the year-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Externally aided projects for preservation of forests and forest wealth are presently under implementation in, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa.

(c) to (e) A project titled "Capacity Building for Participatory Management of Degraded Forests" is presently under implementation with assistance from Government of Sweden in Orissa for development of forests. The project agreement was signed in December 1997 and the project is in its initial stages of implementation. The main project activities are likely to start during 1998-99.

**Burning of Firecrackers**

297. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that burning of firecrackers every year have created imbalance in the environment;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to ban burning of fire-crackers in the major cities in view of pollution; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): Bursting of fire-crackers may lead to increase in noise levels and pose air pollution problems for short duration. However, no scientific evidence has been observed, causing imbalance in the environment due to bursting of fire-crackers.

(b) and (c) The Central Government and the Central Pollution Control Board had advised the Governments and State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees to take necessary measures to control pollution from bursting of fire-crackers during Diwali in October, 1997.

**Linking Environment with International Trade**

298. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an attempt to link environment with international trade by developed countries with a view to creating trade barrier against developing countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the stand and remedial steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) There is an attempt to link environment with international trade by developed countries with a view to creating trade barriers against developing countries. Such attempt is being made through national environmental standards, regulations, eco-labelling, packaging, process and production methods as technical barriers to trade. The Government is opposed to the creation of any disguised barriers to trade by the developed countries in the garb of environmental protection and has taken the stand that international and national rules should not create unnecessary or unjustifiable obstacles to international trade.